



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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#### Testimony

#### In Support Of H.B. 5058, An Act Concerning Substance Abuse Treatment Public Health Committee March 4, 2015

Chairwoman Senator Gerratana, Chairman Representative Ritter, Ranking Member Senator Markley, Ranking Member Representative Srinivasan, and distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 5058, AN ACT CONCERNING SUBSTANCE ABUSE TREATMENT.

I wish to bring to your attention the restrictions that currently exist on individuals seeking to receive medical treatment for drug addictions. Facilities have required individuals seeking treatment be under the influence of drugs or alcohol before ordering evaluations, while sober individuals are turned away, encouraging them to get high and return. This counterproductive practice leaves those with addictions vulnerable and susceptible to relapses, slowing the recovery process. HB 5058 would amend Title 19a of the general statutes in order to allow sober individuals suffering from addictions to be evaluated for a substance abuse program.

This legislation is especially necessary to the residents of Connecticut as the number of deaths caused by drug and alcohol abuse is steadily increasing. In 2012, there were a reported 355 deaths; in 2014, this number rose to 558 deaths. The northwest corner of Connecticut is experiencing a particularly tough struggle with heroin addiction and abuse as demonstrated by a 56% increase of heroin related deaths between 2013 and 2014. HB 5058 will open access to treatment options for those suffering with addictions.

Admitting one's weakness and asking for help is a difficult step many people are unable to do. When one finally builds up the courage, the will, and the family support to seek help for an addiction, to be turned away because they are sober at that time is a devastating set back. Thank you and the Committee for this opportunity to testify and for your consideration of HB 5058.

Jay M. Case  
State Representative, 63<sup>rd</sup> District